



Free Lions

THE ENGLAND FANZINE FOOTBALL SUPPORTERS' ASSOCIATION

ISSUE 168



FSA FOOTBALL
SUPPORTERS'
ASSOCIATION

CZECH REPUBLIC V ENGLAND
11TH OCTOBER 2019

BY FANS FOR FANS

STRENGTH COMES IN NUMBERS...
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WELCOME TO THE LATEST EDITION OF **FREE LIONS** 168

...the **free** England fanzine
produced and distributed by
the **Football Supporters'
Association (FSA)** as part of
our **Fans' Embassy** service

Czech Republic v England

Sinobo Arena, Prague
Friday, 11th October 2019
Kick-off 20:45, local time
England will probably
play in **WHITE**



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AND welcome to Prague, capital city of the Czech Republic, for England's first visit here for over 27 years. A lot has changed in that time – we're playing a different team, for a start, as our opponents were Czechoslovakia back then – and Prague itself has been transformed.

It still has all the old charm and beautiful historic architecture, but the city has built a new reputation for itself as a tourist destination and popular venue for, among other things, stag parties.

A party city like Prague can be a great place for an England game, and it's certainly proved an attractive prospect for over 3,000 of us who have travelled over for the match, with many no doubt planning to make a weekend of it.

The Football Supporters' Association (FSA) are here too, in the form of our

fans' embassy distributing copies of this lovely little magazine and being on hand to help with any information, advice or assistance that you might need.

It's all done for fans, by fans: the FSA is the independent membership-based national fans' organisation providing a collective voice for football supporters, and if you're not already a member, then join today via the website at www.thefsa.org.uk – it's free.

We hope everyone has a great time, especially if you're at your first away game – welcome to the party.

All we ask is that you treat each other, and everyone else you meet, with respect: this is an opportunity to make friends, and attract admiration, not criticism.

So enjoy yourselves – but don't be a dick.

COVER STORY

A rare example of an England player plying their trade at a foreign club, Camberwell-born **Jadon Sancho** was named in the Bundesliga Team of the Season last year, and got his England scoring career off to a flying start with a brace against Kosovo last month.



IT WASN'T ME

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THANK YOU

As ever, this fanzine has been a team effort. This edition was edited by Kevin Miles, and thanks are due to Phil Rowley; Clive Hetherington; Ashley Brown; Harpreet Robertson; Tony Connifford; Adrian Roberts; and Peter Daykin. If there are any mistakes, it's Liam's fault.

FSA FOOTBALL
SUPPORTERS'
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embassy

DIFFERENT CLASS

BY CLIVE HETHERINGTON



THE Czech Republic's capitulation to England in March was a measure of the chasm in class that the Three Lions now routinely encounter in major tournament qualifying.

While confident Kosovo did their best to try to reverse that trend at Southampton last month, England are now unbeaten in World Cup and European Championship qualification in 43 matches stretching back to a 1-0 defeat under Fabio Capello in Ukraine a decade ago.

More might have been expected from the Czechs at Wembley, but they were no match for Gareth Southgate's side, who swept to an emphatic 5-0 victory with Raheem Sterling registering his first hat-trick for his country.

It was a brittle-looking visiting defence, at the heart of which were two players with experience of playing in England. Tomas Kalas, formerly with Chelsea and who

joined Bristol City this summer for £8million following a season-long loan – he also had temporary stints at Middlesbrough and Fulham – netted a late own goal against England.

And alongside him was Ondrej Celustka, who spent a difficult spell on loan to Sunderland in 2013-14 and is now in Turkey with Antalyaspor.

But, having then lost 3-1 to Brazil in a friendly, the Czechs bounced back in June with a 2-1 qualifying win over Bulgaria in Prague, with Roma striker Patrik Schick, now on loan to Leipzig, scoring either

side of half-time – and going close to a hat-trick of his own when heading against the bar – after they had fallen behind to Ismail Isa's third-minute goal.

Jaroslav Silhavy's side followed that with a 3-0 home victory against Montenegro three days later.

Schick was among the goals again, this time with a penalty, after Jakub Jankto and a Boris Kopitovic own goal planted the platform for the win.

But, if the Czechs had looked likely to be England's closest challengers in the group, a 2-1 defeat in Kosovo last month suggested otherwise.

After going ahead on 16 minutes through Schick, Kosovo hit back quickly with Vedat Muriqi's effort and completely turned the tables in the 66th minute thanks to Mergim Vojvoda, who profited from Valon Berisha's quickly-taken corner.

Former England striker Garry Birtles, commentating on the game on Sky Sports, was impressed with

>> CLIVE'S VERDICT

England are on their travels again in a Euro 2020 qualifying campaign where they have been slick in attack, but sloppy at the back. Victory will seal qualification in what is only the Three Lions' fourth meeting

Czech Republic 1, England 3

with the Czechs – and the first time we have visited – since the split with Slovakia. The record stands at two wins and a draw in England's favour. It was 2-2 with Czechoslovakia the last time England were in Prague in 1992.

AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH CLIVE HETHERINGTON?

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>> CZECH REPUBLIC – THE KEY THREE



TOMAS VACLIK

Having conceded only three goals in his last five games for his country, the Sevilla goalkeeper is

unquestionably the Czechs' most reliable last line of defence behind a rearguard that leaked five against England in March with Jiri Pavlenka between the posts. Vaclik, 30, was out through injury for the 5-0 Wembley walloping and the 3-1 friendly defeat by Brazil. He started off at Vitkovice then went to Viktoria Zizkov, but soon joined Sparta Prague before spending four years with Swiss giants Basel. La Liga outfit Sevilla came calling in July 2018 in a deal reported to be worth around only £5million.



PATRIK SCHICK

The versatile forward, who plays through the middle, as a 'No 10' or wide,

joined RB Leipzig on a season's loan from Roma in September, with the Germans having an option to make the deal permanent. Schick, 23, has scored 16 goals in Serie A for Sampdoria and Roma, and nine for his nation – four in Euro 2020 qualifying. He began at Sparta Prague and spent a loan spell with city rivals Bohemians before moving to Italy with Sampdoria in summer 2016. Only a year later came an initial loan to Roma ahead of a club-record deal valued in the region of £35million.



VLADIMIR DARIDA

The central midfielder, 29, netted his fourth international goal with a stoppage-

time penalty in the 3-0 win against Montenegro last month. He launched his career with local club Viktoria Plzen and had a loan stint at Banik Sokolov before a move to Germany beckoned. He joined Freiburg in 2013 and then hooked up with Hertha Berlin in 2015, scoring a spot-kick on his debut. Having amassed more than 50 senior caps, Darida has, in many ways, taken over the mantle of former Arsenal man Tomas Rosicky with his energetic performances which have been known to be fuelled by gluten-free pizza.

Schick's goal. He said: "It was an absolutely wonderful finish. He'd previously smashed one over the bar from the edge of the box, but he learned his lesson. The move to create the goal was superb and he just caressed the ball into the bottom corner of the net."

The Czechs, however, squandered chances to get back into the game and jubilant Kosovo jumped above them – and briefly, England, too – to top the group, before the Three Lions' 4-0 victory over Bulgaria at Wembley later in the day demonstrated again how weak the opposition can be in qualifying.

Silhavy's men were restored to second spot in the section after another 3-0 win against Montenegro, with Tomas Soucek, Lukas Masopust and a Vladimir Darida penalty making the difference.

The Czechs, who have known much better times on the international scene, are eager to revive their flagging fortunes, having crashed out at the Euro 2016 finals in France with only a point from their three group games.

They then failed to qualify for the World Cup in Russia and finished second to Ukraine in their Nations

League section, therefore missing out on the guarantee of a Euro 2020 play-off place.

But a 1-0 success at home to Slovakia, with Schlick producing a composed winner, kept them in League B in the Nations League.

Jaroslav Silhavy, who was appointed in September last year after the sacking of Karel Jarolim in the wake of a 5-1 friendly defeat by Russia, said: "We are glad to have kept our place in League B. Our goal now is to move from qualification to the final tournament."



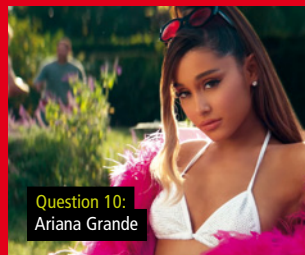
SCOUSE PHIL'S FREE LIONS CZECH MUSIC QUIZ

ANSWERS
ON PAGE
13

CZECH mate. It could mean your friend in Prague, but it could also be misheard as the final move in the game of chess. So, to celebrate this spurious link, Scouse Phil presents a music quiz in which each question, or answer, has some connection with popular household games.



Question 7:
Joss Stone



Question 10:
Ariana Grande

1 What is the name of the board game which has the dice in the middle of the board under a plastic cone, and shares its name with a song by Soft Cell?

2 Which Top Ten hit from 1980 contained the lyric, 'he always beat me at Subbutoe, 'cos he flicked to kick, and I didn't know'?

3 Dating from the sixth century, which board game, named after the Latin word meaning 'I Play', is also the name of a 2018 single by Tony Kakkar?

4 Sharing its name with a card game, what was over troubled

water in the title of a Simon and Garfunkel single and album?

5 'Let's play Twister, let's play Risk', are lyrics from the 1992 single 'Man on the Moon' by which American band?

6 Which Tim Rice musical features the song 'I Knew Him So Well' which was a hit for Elaine Paige and Barbara Dickson?

7 Joni Mitchell in 1988 and Joss Stone in 2004 both had a hit with which song that shares its name with a board game consisting of 100 squares and things you can go up and down?

8 'Rhythm is a Dancer' was a massive Number One dance anthem in 1992, by which German group who share their name with a very popular card game?

9 Which 1992 song by 'shoegazing' band Ride shares its name with possibly the best board game ever, where you have to construct a highly complicated mechanism to catch a rodent?

10 Which 2019 single by Ariana Grande and Victoria Monet shares its name with what many people would say is the daddy of all board games, first produced in 1934?

FSA FANS' EMBASSY

THE Football Supporters' Association's fans' embassy service will be on hand in Prague to offer any advice, information and assistance that you might need to make your trip go smoothly. The fans' embassy will be based at the corner of Republic Square (Namesti Republiky) next to V Celnici.

We will be operating on the afternoon of Thursday 10th October, and then on match day (Friday 11th October) from 10:00 through to 17:00.

We will of course be contactable around the clock via the helpline on +44 7956 121314, and we'll see you all in Sofia on Sunday!



WELCOME TO PRAGUE

YOUR FREE LIONS GUIDE

WELCOME to Prague, the capital city of the Czech Republic and 14th largest city in the EU - although it could well move up to being 13th largest on 1st November this year, depending on Brexit developments.

This will be the first time that Prague has hosted a game between the Czech Republic (or Czechia as the locals know it) and England, all three previous encounters having taken place at Wembley. That there have only been three meetings between the two teams is of course down to the fact that prior to 1993 what is now the Czech Republic was part of Czechoslovakia.

Czechoslovakia became independent at the end of the First World War and was subsequently occupied by Nazi Germany during World War Two, being liberated in 1945 by the USA from the west and the Soviet Union from the east. From 1948 Czechoslovakia was part



The Old Town Square

of the Soviet Bloc under Russian influence, which was enforced in 1968 by a military invasion by five Warsaw Pact countries to put an end to a period of liberalisation known as the 'Prague Spring'.

In 1989 the 'Velvet Revolution' saw a relatively peaceful end to communism, and on the 1st January 1993 Czechoslovakia ceased to exist, being separated into two independent countries, the

Czech Republic and the Republic of Slovakia.

This **historic centre** of Prague is a UNESCO world heritage site and the city combines a new-found reputation as a party town with a rich cultural history. Straddling the **Vltava** river, the "City of a Hundred Spires" is known for its **Old Town Square**, its baroque architecture, the mediaeval **Astronomical Clock** and its top-quality beers.

TICKET COLLECTION

IN keeping with the usual routine, all members of the England Supporters' Travel Club (ESTC) will be required to pick up their own tickets in person in Prague.

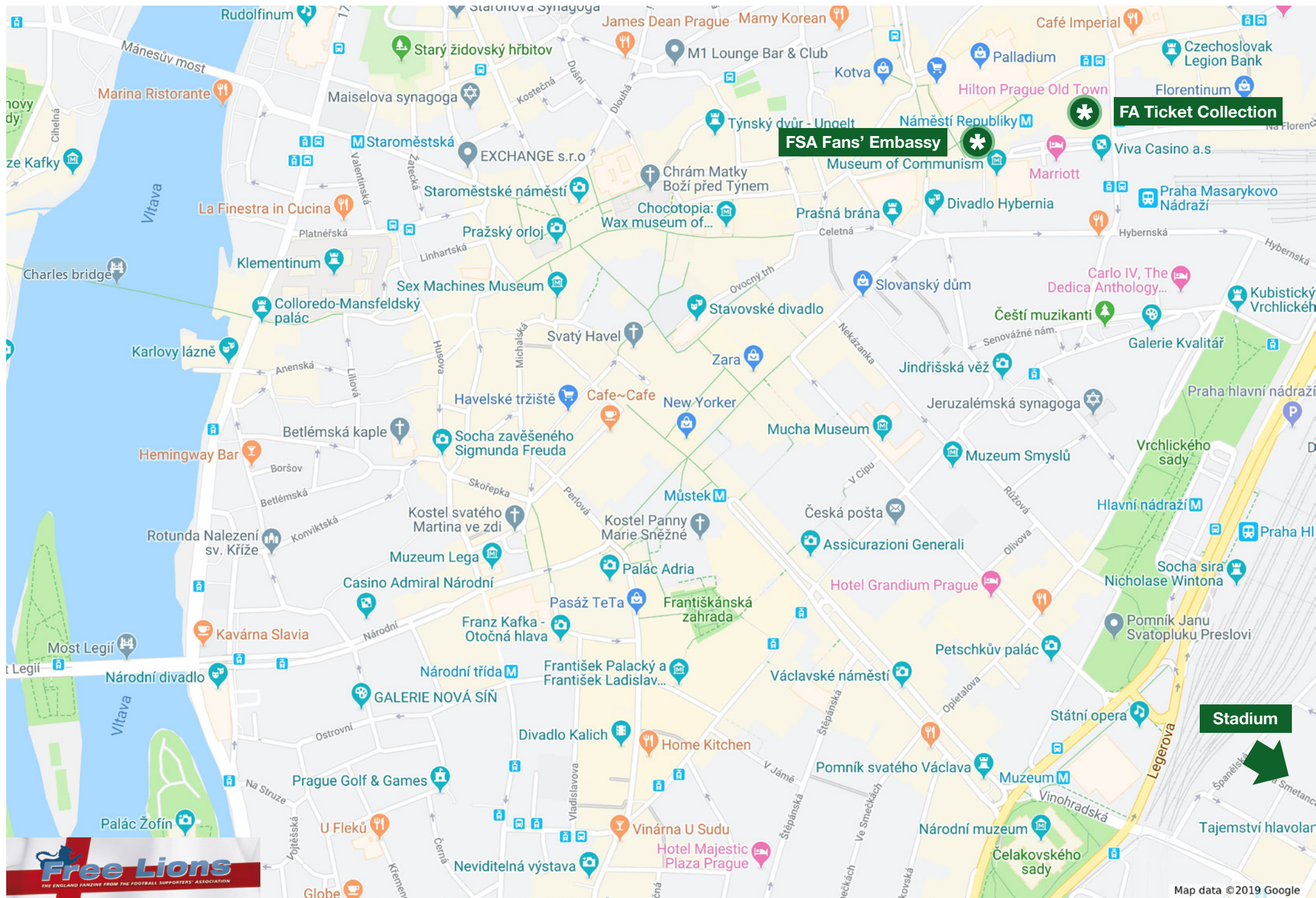
You'll need up-to-date photo ID (your ESTC membership card would obviously fit the bill nicely), and it's a big help if you can remember the

name of the lead booker in your group, as that's how the tickets will be stored.

The ticket collection point in Prague is at the **Hilton Prague Old Town**, which is at **V Celnici 7, 110 000 Nove Mesto, Prague** – the nearest Metro station is **Namesti Republiky** on line B, the yellow line.

Tickets will be available for collection on Thursday 10th October between 16:00 and 20:00, and on match day, Friday 11th October between 10:00 and 18:00.

For latecomers, there will also be a further opportunity to collect tickets from a booth close to **Gate 3 at the stadium**, between 19:00 and 20:45.



WELCOME TO PRAGUE

YOUR FREE LIONS GUIDE



THE STADIUM



THE Sinobo Stadium is located in the Vršovice district of Prague to the south-east of the city centre and is home to current Czech First League champions Slavia Prague.

It is an all-seater stadium with a capacity of 21,000, although for our game that capacity is slightly reduced to 19,378.

The first stadium on this site was built as a home for Slavia in 1953, a multi-sports stadium complete with athletics track with a capacity of 50,000, mostly standing terraces.

The Eden Stadium as it was then known proved to be far from a paradise. After years of planning changes and false starts it was demolished in December 2003, but it took until October 2006 for rebuilding to start, and until May 2008 for the new stadium to be completed.

The first competitive game played at the new ground was Slavia Prague's final game of the 2007-2008 stadium, a 2-2 draw

against Jablonec which was enough to secure them the league title – not a bad way to start life in a new home.

The new Eden stadium then had a four-year spell under the name of the "Synot Tip Arena" (thanks to sponsorship from a betting company) before reverting to the name of the Eden Arena. It hosted the UEFA Super Cup final in 2013, a 2-2 draw between Bayern Munich and Chelsea.

In 2016, Slavia's majority owners CEFC China Energy purchased 70% of the stadium, and bought it outright the following year, resulting in the renaming to its current title, the Sinobo stadium.

The Sinobo Stadium is one of the grounds used to host games of the national team, the most frequently used being the home of Sparta Prague, the Generali Arena or Stadion Letna. It has also provided a temporary home to Bohemians 1905, and hosted home Champions League matches for Viktoria Plzen in 2011.

GETTING THERE

THE stadium is quite a way from the city centre - for example from Wenceslas Square it's nearly an hour's walk – so it is probably best to take one of the multiple forms of public transport available.

The nearest Metro station to the ground is Strasnicka on Line A (the green line), but this still leaves a 20 minute walk to the ground.

Both the bus and tram have stops right outside the ground, imaginatively called 'Slavia'.

Tram lines 2, 6, 7, 13, 17, 22 and 24 all run from the city centre; the relevant bus routes are number 135, 136 150 and 213.

Both buses and trams will be busy so allow a little extra time to get to the stadium and expect to wait a while after the final whistle.

We are informed that although there are not specific shuttle buses to the ground, the city does lay on extra services on matchdays to ease congestion.

If you plan to use public transport, we recommend either buying an extra single ticket in advance for your return journey, or even spending a little extra to buy a day ticket at a cost of 110 CZP, to avoid having to queue for a ticket after the match.

GROUND RULES

THE gates will open at 18:45 local time, two hours before kick-off. The FA have managed to secure 3,705 tickets for England fans.

Most of us (about 3,000 of us) will be housed in the Tribuna Fr. Planicky - the cheap seats. They comprise sections 119 through to 124 which run from one corner of the stadium around to about halfway behind one goal. To access these seats all fans will use gate 3.

The additional 700 tickets are category 1 – the posh seats - and will be on the side of the ground known as Tribuna Vichod which fans should access through gate 2.

Whether you arrive via public transport or taxi it is likely you will arrive behind the main stand, Tribuna J.W. Maddena.

Assuming you do then as you look at the outside of the stand, gate 3 (most ticketholders) will be to the right and around the end of the stadium, whilst gate 2 (category 1 tickets only) will be to the left.

Close to the perimeter of the stadium there will be a visual ticket and bag check. Please note that the increasingly common A4-size bag restrictions are in place, and that if you do turn up with a larger bag there are no storage facilities at the ground.



As you approach the turnstiles there will be a full bag and body search. The usual list of restricted items applies, so obviously no pyrotechnics are allowed, and we've been warned that bottles of perfume or cosmetics will not be allowed in either.

Although there will not be ID checks for everyone on entry to the ground, it is a legal requirement to carry photo ID with you in the Czech Republic, and stewards, security staff and police have the right to ask to see both that and your match ticket. A photocopy of the personal details page of your passport should be OK if you don't wish to carry the real thing around with you.

There will be no alcohol on sale in the ground, and anyone looking (or presumably sounding, or even smelling) drunk is likely to be refused entry.

Flags are allowed in the ground provided they are no bigger than 2m x 1.5m. There are no arrangements for early access to hang flags and it is also worth noting that due to the design of the ground there is limited space to actually hang them, so it may be worth considering going in as soon as the gates open.

You may wish to tread carefully in the ground, the rake of the stand is pretty steep and there are hardly any crowd barriers to break a fall down the steps or seating.

There is no plan to hold English supporters back in the stadium after the final whistle, though of course this could change on the night. We will be kept informed via tannoy announcements in English and if we are held back we should still have access to toilet and refreshment facilities.

WELCOME TO PRAGUE

YOUR FREE LIONS GUIDE



» GETTING AROUND

PRAQUE'S city centre is fairly compact, so you should be able to get to most of the places you'll want to visit on foot. The city is well served by public transport though, with a good network of three Metro lines, trams, buses and even a funicular railway.

All public transport use the same ticketing system, with a single ticket allowing for travel on any combination of modes of transport within a certain time frame. A single ticket for 30 minutes of travelling costs **24 CZK**, with 90 minutes costing **32 CZK**; a one-day pass costs **110 CZK**, and a three-day pass **310 CZK**. Services run until midnight every night.

Tickets can be bought in advance from Metro stations, newsagents, public transport information centres and from orange machines at major tram and bus stops. They have to be validated on departure in the orange machines at the top of escalators into Metro stations, or inside trams and buses.

Taxis are abundant and can be hailed on the street, but come with a bit of a health warning: they have a reputation for ripping off visitors. Make sure the meter is switched on and only pay what's indicated. Uber is popular here and gives you the added security of knowing the fare in advance.

📍 THINGS TO SEE AND DO

THE centre of Prague is split into two areas known as the **Old Town (Staré Město)** and **New Town (Nové Město)**. A little further afield are the other areas of interest, the **Lesser Town (Malá Strana)** and **Zizkov**.

The old town boasts a wealth of baroque and gothic architectural styles centred around the **Old Town Hall**, where it is possible to visit the gothic tower, historic halls and also the underground areas. It is open from **09:00**, closing at **19:00** although the tower tends to stay open until **22:00**; the standard cost is **250 CZK**. If you choose to admire it from the outside you can join the many tourists who will gather on the hour to watch the astronomical clock perform its mechanical routine.

The new town is centred around **Wenceslas Square**, and as the name suggests tends to feature more modern buildings. At the top of the square is the **National Museum** which has recently been refurbished and steadily re-opened. It is an impressive building but it's worth checking which particular exhibitions are open and whether they are of interest.

Throughout the new town you will find many of the shops you are used to seeing in the UK as well as countless bars and restaurants.



The **Lesser Town** is across the **River Vltava** from the **Old Town**. There are plenty of bridges to choose from but the most impressive is the famous **Charles Bridge**, the origins of which date back over 650 years. This part of town is overlooked by **Prague Castle** which dates back over a thousand years and is a huge complex of palaces, fortifications, churches and gardens, with a panoramic view over the city. The castle is open from **09:00** to **17:00**, with a standard entry ticket costing **350 CZK**.

Further afield, heading out east towards the ground is the district of **Zizkov**. Although there are some large parks here the most striking feature is the 216m TV tower: visible from many places around the city perhaps its strangest feature are the ten giant sculptures of babies climbing the tower. The highest viewing platform is a little under halfway up and offers a great view of the city; the tower is open from **09:00** to midnight each day and admission costs **250 CZK**.

🍴 EATING & DRINKING

PRAQUE has developed a reputation as a stag party destination, and so it won't be a surprise to anyone to discover that there is no shortage of pubs, clubs and restaurants.

Some of the most obvious places to congregate have however become tourist traps and can be very expensive, charging London prices. Wander a bit further, down the numerous side streets or into areas frequented by locals away from the **old town centre**, and you'll find much more affordable options.

One of the places that visiting football fans have tended to congregate in the past has been in and around **Wenceslas Square** in the new town, and this is an example of how expensive parts of Prague have become.

Venture a bit further afield, such as down **Stepanska**, one of the roads off the square, and you'll find cheaper places like the inevitable Irish bar, **Rocky O'Reilly's**.

If so inclined, you could spend



Charles Bridge

all day just going from Irish bar to another – like **McCarthy's** on **Rytirska** or the **Dubliner** on **Tyn**. There are plenty of bars off the top of **Wenceslas Square** and in the streets leading into the **Old Town**.

Prague has plenty to offer with cuisine from around the world, and most of the bars offer some type of food to accompany the beer.

Traditional Czech food has similarities to German, Austrian and Hungarian with sausages and roast meats common, but soups and stews also feature which is great if the weather is cool. If you fancy trying a good local goulash

you could eat at **Mincovna** on **Old Town Square**.

For those who like to stick with what they know we counted more than ten **McDonald's** and a couple of **Pizza Huts** dotted around; the **Hard Rock Café** is at **Dum U Rotta, Male nam**.

For those feeling a little more adventurous it is worth heading away from the old and new town into the areas the locals frequent, like **Zizkov** to the east, or across the river via the **Charles Bridge** to **Malá Strana**, the **Lesser Town**.

Be warned that it is illegal to drink on the streets in many of the city areas.

Quiz Answers

- Football Quiz (Page 16)
1. Stockport County
 2. Seven
 3. Colchester United
 4. Mark Sampson
 5. Slavia Prague
 6. Bjorn Engels
 7. Brighton and Wolves
 8. Kosovo
 9. Queen's Park
 10. Rangers
 11. John Scales
- Music Quiz (Page 6)
1. Frustration 2. 'My Perfect Cousin' by The Undertones
 3. Ludo
 4. Bridge (Bridge over Troubled Water)
 5. REM
 6. Chess
 7. Snakes and Ladders
 8. Snap
 9. Mouse Trap
 10. Monopoly





MUST STONES KICK ON?

BY CLIVE HETHERINGTON



GARY NEVILLE and Sky Sports sparring partner Jamie Carragher have been at odds over hapless England defender John Stones.

The Manchester City centre-back endured a Nations League semi-final nightmare as Gareth Southgate's side lost 3-1 to the Netherlands in Portugal in June.

After being behind, the Dutch were ahead in extra-time when Stones gave the ball away to Memphis Depay and, despite goalkeeper Jordan Pickford's save, Quincy Promes forced the ball in off right-back Kyle Walker.

Stones was even partly at fault when Ronald Koeman's men dealt the killer blow, the £47.5million defender playing a ball that put Chelsea midfielder Ross Barkley under pressure and presented Depay with the chance to tee up Promes.

But Michael Keane's clanger as England conceded after 34 seconds

in the highly-entertaining 5-3 win over Kosovo at Southampton, showed Stones is not alone when it comes to mistakes.

In the immediate aftermath of the Dutch debacle, ex-England centre-back Carragher delivered a withering assessment of Stones "stupid" decision-making that led to Promes' clincher.

And Carragher, a Liverpool legend as a player but an Everton fan as a youngster, believes Stones has failed to fulfil the potential that won him his mega-money move – then the second costliest in the world for a defender – from Goodison Park to the Etihad Stadium in August 2016.

Carragher said: "If I'm being totally honest, I don't think John Stones has really kicked on since he made that move from Everton to Manchester City.

"He might have Premier League title medals, but I still don't feel

he has the 100 per cent backing of Pep Guardiola.

"I've never felt that Stones is one of the first names on the team sheet at City. I know it's difficult and they're a great side, but it still doesn't feel like he has cemented his position."

But former Manchester United and England right-back Neville – not for the first time where old rival Carragher is concerned – holds the opposite opinion and believes Stones will ultimately "come good".

Neville said: "I disagree with what Jamie said about Stones not kicking on. He's played in a great side where there was Vincent Kompany, Aymeric Laporte and Nicolas Otamendi.

"Kompany is one of the best centre-backs we've seen in the Premier League; Laporte, I think, is outstanding and Otamendi is more aggressive in the air.

"I think Stones has a big future, but he just has to find himself. Last summer, at the World Cup, he was at fault for one of the goals we conceded against Croatia. He had another moment against the Dutch.

"He has to be different, more aggressive, but you have to persist with players. If you keep believing in players, eventually they come good."

Southgate wisely omitted Stones from the Nations League third-

place play-off with Switzerland, which England won on penalties.

An early-season injury didn't help Stones's cause and Southgate left him out of the squad for the Euro 2020 home qualifiers against Bulgaria and Kosovo.

But the Three Lions' coach has defended Stones, insisting "fatigue" may have played a part in his below-par display against the Dutch.

Southgate said: "He knows I'm here to support him. He had a difficult end to the season in that he was not playing regularly at his club.

"We still think he has huge qualities and huge potential to be a top player, but he had so little football at the end of the season that the sharpness and fatigue as the game wore on were definitely factors.

"It's difficult to know why individual errors like that could happen. I can only say that to play the way we want to play takes courage and, when it doesn't work, it's very difficult for the players.

"It's easy to turn round and kill them. But we have some defenders who are prepared to take the ball in areas where many defenders in the world are not. It's been the bedrock of how we've progressed and we have to continue with it but, of course, we can't make the mistakes we did."

AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH CLIVE HETHERINGTON?

CONTACT CLIVE VIA FREELIONS@THEFSA.ORG.UK

As for Stones himself, he was candid in his admission that he let himself and his teammates down. He said: "I love England and playing for England and it was a difficult time. It was a mistake.

"There were other mistakes in that game that weren't highlighted as much, but that was the pivotal moment, I suppose.

"I took some time away in my holidays and reflected. I've come back this season fighting for my chance to play again and to put that right, and I'm sure I will because I've got that strong mindset of putting things right and being honest when you've done something wrong.

"I held my hands up and I told all my team-mates and the staff there what I'd done wrong, and that we'd move on from that. I've moved on from that and I'll try to correct that with my performances in the future."

Meanwhile, Neville knows there was deep disappointment around the country that England once again fell victim to their semi-final jinx, having lost at the same stage to Croatia in Russia – not to mention in the last four against the Germans at both the 1990 World Cup and Euro '96.

And if we want to go even further back, Yugoslavia beat England in the 1968 European Championship semi-finals, albeit in a four-team tournament not dissimilar to this summer's Nations League format.



Neville maintains the view that a youthful England will continue to improve and fans must focus on the positives, but he also insists Southgate's charges need to make more telling use of the ball when in possession.

He said: "We've reached the semi-finals of the last two tournaments and Gareth's done an amazing job. So we're now trying to make that next jump.

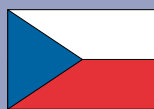
"I think England will get better. I think we're producing young players who are more technically gifted and we now need to get to a point where we control matches.

"People will point to the fact that the Holland game was 50-50 in terms of possession, but the quality of the Dutch possession, pressing us back, was a lot better than our possession."



CZECH REPUBLIC SQUAD WORDSEARCH

Just for fun, we've hidden the surnames of the Czech Republic players from their squad for this game in the Wordsearch grid. If you like, you can try to find them.



Tomáš	VACLIK	Sevilla
Jirí	PAVLENKA	Werder Bremen
Ondrej	KOLAR	Slavia Prague
David	HOVORKA	Slavia Prague
Pavel	KADERABEK	1899 Hoffenheim
Filip	NOVAK	Trabzonspor
Andrey	KUDELA	Slavia Prague
Jakub	BRABEC	Viktoria Plzen
Ondrej	CELUSTKA	Antalyaspor
Jan	BORIL	Slavia Prague
Vladimír	COUFAL	Slavia Prague
Stefan	SIMIC	Hajduk Split
Vladimír	DARIDA	Hertha BSC
Ladislav	KREJCI	Bologna
Jakub	JANKTO	Sampdoria
Tomáš	SOUCEK	Slavia Prague
Josef	HUSBAUER	Slavia Prague
Jan	KOPIC	Viktoria Plzen
Lukáš	MASOPOST	Slavia Prague
Alex	KRAL	Spartak Moscow
David	PAVELKA	Kasimpasa Spor Kulubu
Michael	KRMENCIK	Viktoria Plzen
Patrik	SCHICK	RB Leipzig
Martin	DOLEZAL	Jablonec

N U F C E L U S T K A T O O N
 O A Z Z A G B C I M I S J W Q
 V S I R V B O H Z I C J E R K
 A Q K L D A R I D A B A T T Y
 K B O B B Y I C H R O N I L C
 A R P A V E L K A D B K F I X
 D H M R O B S O N R E T P K O
 E G R E U A B S U H A O F J L
 R K Q Z N O R I M L K O L A R
 A E K I L C A V O A N S Z M C
 B C M A X J I W P F E E P L E
 E U A L E D U K R U L T A R B
 K O E L D D A W H O V O R K A
 T S U P O S A M D C A W E N R
 A L S H E A R E R K P U S M B

SCOUSE PHIL'S

FREE LIONS FOOTBALL QUIZ

1 Which ex-Football League side, now in the National League, play their home games at Edgeley Park?

2 Wembley is due to host the Champions League final in 2023, but how many previous European Cup/Champions League Finals has it hosted?

3 Which team knocked Spurs out of this season's Carabao Cup on penalties?

4 Who did Phil Neville replace as manager of the England Women's football team?

5 Which team are the current champions of the Czech Republic's top flight?

6 Which Aston Villa defender shares a surname with a co-author of The Communist Party Manifesto, first published in English in 1888?

7 Who were the beaten semi-finalists in last season's FA Cup?

8 Which country in England's 2020 Euro Qualifying group had England never previously played against?

9 Which Championship club have played home league games at 14 different venues, more than any other League club?

10 I was born in Harrogate in 1966 and played for various clubs including Bristol Rovers, Wimbledon and Spurs, winning my three England caps in 1995 whilst at Liverpool. Who am I?

**ANSWERS
ON PAGE**

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